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ORIGINAL ARTICLES

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PYELOGRAPHY: COMMON DIAGNOSTIC ERRORS *

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San Francisco

INTRODUCTION

The object of this paper is to call attention to the ease with which mistakes in interpretation of renal roentgenograms can be made, and how by complete systematic examinations they can be avoided. For the material used I am under obligations to the departments of roentgenology of the Stanford University Hospital, University of California Hospital, Letterman General Hospital, U. S. Marine Hospital, U. S. Navy Hospital (Mare Island), and to Drs. Hinman, Hartmann, Mathe, Stevens, Player, Kreutzmann, and Raymond.

Urology has become a very attractive specialty, because of the accuracy of diagnosis. This is due to the routine systematic examinations made, and the many checks upon the investigations. One of the most valuable procedures is that of pyelography.

* Read before the San Francisco County Medical Society, October 31, 1922.

This was first advocated by Voelcker and von Lichtenberg¹ in 1906, popularized in the United States by Braasch² in 1910, and introduced into England by Thomson Walker³ in 1911. Unfortunately, whenever a new diagnostic or therapeutic measure is recommended by an authority it immediately comes into almost universal use by both specialist and general practitioner. Too often, it is regarded as a "miracle performer," and proven methods are for the time discarded. Pyelography is one of our most important diagnostic procedures, but cannot be depended upon alone, as the incorrect interpretation of pyelograms easily leads to unnecessary surgery.

Following the adoption of pyelography as a routine step in urological examinations, those who worked in the larger clinics gradually became familiar with the confusing types, as well as the typical normal cases; but unfortunately little has been published as to the exceptions and fine methods of differentiation in borderline cases. Braasch's "Pyelography"⁴ is the vade-mecum of the urologist, and, though it still remains the most important single contribution to the subject, it was a pioneer publication, stressing typical cases, and cannot be followed blindly, as great strides have been made in this field since its publication.

TECHNIQUE

In the early days of pyelography, numerous accidents and fatalities occurred due to the toxicity of the agents used, overdilatation of the kidney pelvis,⁵ and infiltration of the kidney parenchyma.⁶ The three agents (sodium iodide,⁷ sodium bromide, and thorium nitrate), in common use at the present time, are, when properly used, non-toxic. However, accidents still occur because of the use of; (1) old reesterilized solutions, (2) too concentrated solutions, and (3) overinjections, with tearing of the renal parenchyma.

It has long been known that the pressure of the blood in the capillaries varied from 20 to 55 mm. of mercury, and that when the intrapelvic pressure exceeded 60 mm. the secretion of urine ceased and filtration occurred in the reverse direction, the substances entering the blood at a fairly rapid rate.⁸ Injection by gravity is the method of choice, and

BOOK REVIEWS

Diseases of the Skin. By Henry H. Hazen, M.D. 2nd ed. St. Louis: C. V. Mosby Company. 1922.

Dr. Hazen's second edition of *Diseases of the Skin* is a book of convenient size, good print, and clearly expressive of the author's idea of a text-book. The illustrations are excellent, but the book is too incomplete in essentials. For instance, the woeful neglect of radium therapy, with the claim of the superiority of roentgen rays, is the author's personal opinion, but it may fail to supply the reader's wants. His dismissal of some of the generally accepted therapeutic measures is not what one would expect in a text-book. The descriptions of diseases are good. A clinching point in the diagnosis of scabies in women—that of the itching and eruption about the nipples—is missed. Stress is laid upon its presence in the folds beneath the mammae instead.

In favor of the book, the reviewer can frankly state that he felt repaid for the time spent in reading it, and no doubt another would be of the same opinion. The fact that much of the personal side of the writer enters into the treatise adds to its value. G. D. C.

Practical Dietetics in Health and Disease. By Sanford Blum, M.D. Philadelphia: F. A. Davis Company. 1922.

This book on diets by Sanford Blum will be welcomed by many physicians who have felt the need of a ready reference work on diets in health and disease. It is a plain, common sense statement of the essential factors governing the prescription of diets, and the pages can be read to the patient or transcribed for him with the certainty that they will be understood and easily followed.

The freedom of the book from the quantitative attitude toward diet, which has become so familiar during the last decade, is delightful and refreshing; the patient who loves to weigh his bread-crusts, and the physician who wishes to think in terms of calories per kilo of body weight, will get small satisfaction out of this book. It has been written by a clinician for practicing physicians who want to be sure of their ground when directing diets, but who do not wish to burden their minds with formulae and equations of a pseudo-scientific type and a purely factitious character.

A very complex index of diseases and their dietetic treatment and an index of foods giving their indications and contra-indications, adds greatly to the value of the books to the busy man who will appreciate being able to turn to the information required without loss of time. L. S. M.

Abdominal Pain. By Prof. Dr. Norbert Ortner. Authorized translation by Wm. A. Brams & Alfred P. Luger. N. Y. Rebman Company. 1922.

Review of "Abdominal Pain," by Ortner

This book is a clinical treatise discussing the diagnostics of abdominal conditions in a way similar to that in which the problems are presented to the physician. The symptom of pain is taken as the starting point and the diagnosis worked out primarily from the nature, location, and history of this pain. In doing this the author has described an amazing number of abdominal conditions that may arise, both common ones and rare ones. The translation, while doubtless accurate, is somewhat lacking in ease, and the book in consequence is in places rather laborious reading. In spite of this defect, however, it is a valuable and important work, and it is one that is well worthy of a place

in the library of every surgeon and physician. The experience of the author has been large, his observations careful, and his reasoning clear. Time nor future discovery will ever make it possible to neglect the method of studying disease which is presented here and which is as old as the practice of medicine—viz., the study of the symptoms which the patient presents by means of the unaided senses. R. V. L.

BOOKS RECEIVED

The Heart in Modern Practice Diagnosis and Treatment. By William Duncan Reid, M.D., Chief of Heart Clinic at the Boston Dispensary, Junior Assisting Visiting Physician and Member of the Heart Service at the Boston City Hospital. 32 illustrations. Philadelphia and London: J. B. Lippincott Company.

Inflammation in Bones and Joints. By Leonard W. Ely, M.D., Associate Professor of Surgery, Stanford University. 144 illustrations. Philadelphia and London: J. B. Lippincott Company.

The Riddle of the Rhine, Chemical Strategy in Peace and War. By Victor Lefebvre, Officer of the Order of the British Empire (Mil.), Chevalier de la Legion d'Honneur, Officer of the Crown of Italy, Fellow of the Chemical Society, etc. With a preface by Marshal Foch and an introduction by Field Marshal Sir Henry Wilson, Bart., Chief of the Imperial General Staff. New York: E. P. Dutton & Company, 681 Fifth Avenue.

Addresses and Papers, Dedication Ceremonies and Medical Conference, Peking Union Medical College, September 15-22, 1921. Peking, China. 1922.

Rest and Other Things. A little book of Plain Talks on Tuberculosis Problems. By Allen K. Krause, M.D., Associate Professor of Medicine, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore. Williams & Wilkins Company. 1923.

The Patient's Viewpoint. By Paluel J. Flagg, M.D., Author of "The Art of Anaesthesia." The Bruce Publishing Company, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

The Psychology of Power. By J. A. Hadfield, M.A. (Oxon.), M.B. (Edin.) Ashhurst Neurological War Hospital, Oxford. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1923.

The Form and Functions of the Central Nervous System. An Introduction to the Study of Nervous Diseases, by Frederick Tilney, M.D., Professor of Neurology, Columbia University and Henry Alsop Riley, M.D., Associate in Neurology, Columbia University. Second Edition. 591 figures containing 763 illustrations of which 56 are colored. New York: Paul B. Hoeber. 1923.

"Through the babel of popular prattle on Coue, intelligence tests, psycho-analysis, and cults of business or marital success, we are beginning gradually to realize that there is field for scientific investigation in mental as well as physical health, and that it is as right, necessary and justifiable to cultivate the one as the other. But how? Should we hold, with one school, that our troubles exist only in our minds, and to be banished need only to be ignored? Or shrink with horror, in accordance with the tenets of another group, at the dungeon of complexes that such a method would create?"—The Survey, March 15, 1923.

NEW MEMBERS

Alameda County—Joseph B. Enos, Cleve E. Kin-dall, Oakland.

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Santa Barbara County—Gilbert V. Hamilton, Santa Barbara.

Santa Cruz County—W. R. Congdon, Santa Cruz; A. F. Davis, Soquel.

Shasta County—J. E. Taylor, Redding.

Tulare County—Norman C. Paine, Exeter; H. R. D. Shoemaker, Lindsay; J. Harvey Banks, Visalia; Morton W. Fraser, Woodlake.

Obituary

PAUL WEGEFORTH, M. D.

Born May, 1887—Died March, 1923

Dr. Wegeforth was graduated from Baltimore City College with honors. In 1908 he received the degree of Bachelor of Arts from Johns Hopkins

University, and the degree of Doctor of Medicine from the same University in 1912. From 1909 to 1911 he was an exchange student at the Universities of Berlin, Strassburg, and Leipzig. Following graduation he was resident physician at the Church Home and Infirmary at Baltimore, following which he served as assistant to Dr. Harvey Cushing for one and one-half years at the Peter Bent Brigham Hospital.

One of the first volunteers at the outbreak of the war he was sent to Camp Meade at Baltimore, but was soon transferred to the Johns Hopkins Medical School, where he and Dr. Louis Weed were placed in charge of the Army Neuro-Surgical Laboratory, with seventeen assistants. Much valuable work was done and it received honorable mention, eight reprints being published by the Rockefeller Institute in the "Monographs of the Rockefeller Institute of Medical Research," under the names of Dr. Louis Weed, Dr. Paul Wegeforth, Dr. J. B. Ayer, Dr. C. R. Essick.

During his period of military service he was sent to Camp Jackson, Virginia, to investigate an epidemic of meningitis, and while there discovered that meningitis developed within twenty-four to forty-eight hours after a lumber puncture was made on a case suffering with an acute infectious disease. This was considered a very important discovery. He remained at Camp Jackson during the influenza epidemic, putting in long hours working among the men. At another Virginia camp he investigated the sleeping sickness, after which he returned to Johns Hopkins, where he remained until the armistice was declared. After the armistice he was sent to Letterman General Hospital in San Francisco for six months, and was discharged there.

Returning to San Diego he resumed his practice, but was forced to give it up on account of his health about a year ago. Dr. Wegeforth was a member of The American Medical Society, The Alumni Association of Johns Hopkins Medical School, the San Diego County Medical Society, and many other organizations.—(San Diego County Medical Bulletin, April 6.)

DEATHS

Cox H. M. Died at San Luis Obispo, March 4, 1923, age 74. Graduate of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Keokuk, Iowa. Licensed in California in 1895. Up to the time of his retirement in 1920, Dr. Cox was a member of the San Luis Obispo County Medical Society, the State Medical Society and the American Medical Association.

Hon. Ulrich. Died at Los Angeles, March 15, 1923, age 71. Graduate of the University of Louisville Medical Department, 1875. Licensed in California in 1903. He was a member of the American Medical Association.

Kosby, Augustus E. Died at Yuba City, March 21, 1923, age 77. Graduate of the University of California Medical School, San Francisco, 1875. He was a member of the American Medical Association.

Lydston, C. Frank. Died at Los Angeles, March 14, 1923, age 65. Graduate of the Bellevue Hospital Medical College, New York City, 1879. He was a Fellow of the American Medical Association.

White, Mary B. Died at Palo Alto, March 17, 1923, age 66. Graduate of Hahnemann Medical College and Hospital of Chicago. She was a member of the American Medical Association.